

# COMMUNICATION AND VISUAL SUPPORTS

## Delving Deeper: Why & How

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## Agenda

- What are our long-term goals?
  - For students beyond the classroom and school
  - For students within our classrooms
- How do we meet our goals in school?
  - Student Engagement = Positive Behavior
  - Universal Design for Learning (Supports at Tiers 1 & 2)
  - Developmentally Appropriate Supports – Socially and Communicatively
- Tools to meet our Goals - Categories of Visual Supports:
  1. Communication – Comprehension/Expression
  2. Expectations – Behavior, Classroom Jobs/Roles
  3. Daily Routines & Transitions
  4. Visual Supports During Instruction
  5. Social-Emotional Regulation and Development



## LONG TERM GOALS

- Quality Learning and Superior Performance for All
  - For learning while in school
  - For life after graduation
- How do we do this for our students?
  - Student Engagement

## Let's Think About Your Classroom...

*In order for your students  
 to get the most from classroom instruction,*

**What behaviors do you want to see from your  
 students throughout the day?**

## Desired Student Behaviors

What behaviors would optimize your students' learning during classroom instruction?

- following directions
- participating in activities
- getting along with peers
- sitting and attending in a group setting
- waiting turns
- listening
- being independent
- responding & initiating communication
- being emotionally invested and enjoying learning

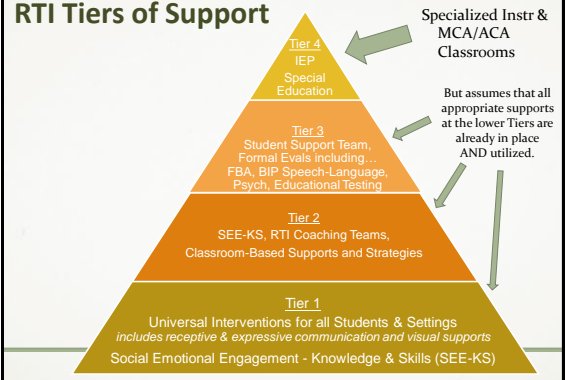
## ENGAGED STUDENTS show "Desired Behaviors"

- Student Engagement = Positive Behavior
- Disruptive/Disinterested Conduct = Negative Behavior
- Observation of Negative Behavior means:  
*There are student needs that need to be accommodated.*
- Meeting Student Needs will often result in an increase in engagement (positive behavior).

## Video – Animal Bingo



## RTI Tiers of Support



## Tier 1 and Tier 2 Supports are...

Universal interventions that are developmentally appropriate for all of your students ...

### Tier 1 – In place in the classroom at ALL times.

- ... But also regularly referred to throughout the day
- ... Students who may not appear to need Tier 1 Visual Supports, STILL benefit
  - a. During times when ability to regulate emotions is challenged
  - b. By developing early, independent executive functioning skills (visualizing time, planning ahead based on schedule changes)

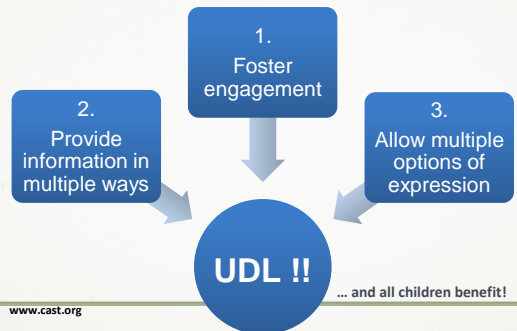
### Tier 2 – Basic modifications to classroom supports already in place

- ... Regular classroom supports are modified for specific students
- ... Tier 2 modifications should still be based on the 3 I's of Engagement: **Investment, Independence, and Initiation**

**\*\* Supports will look different for children at different developmental stages. \*\***

## A Universal Design for Learning

promotes student engagement and access during instruction



## Expectations for the Classroom

### Student Engagement during Instruction

- Focus on **the 3 I's** of Engagement during Instruction (UDL - The teacher provides developmentally appropriate supports to ...)

### **Investment**

(UDL - Foster Student Engagement and Interest)

### **Independence**

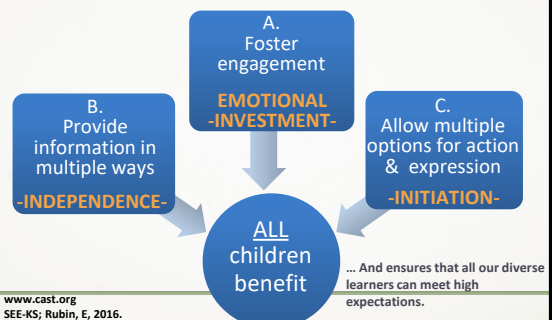
(UDL - Present Information in Multiple Ways)

### **Initiation**

(UDL - Allow Multiple Options for Action & Expression)

## A Universal Design For Learning ...

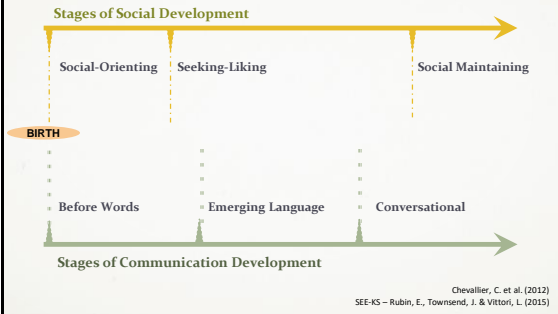
### to Enhance Social Emotional Engagement



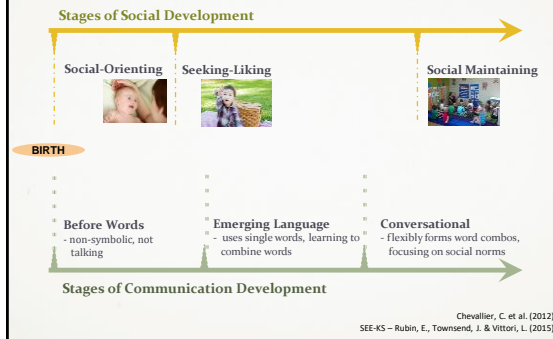
## Categories of Visual Supports

- **Visual Supports serve specific purposes**
  - 1. Communication – Comprehension/Expression
  - 2. Expectations – Behavior, Classroom Jobs/Roles
  - 3. Daily Routines & Transitions
  - 4. Visual Supports During Instruction
  - 5. Social-Emotional Regulation and Development

## Social and Communication Development



## Social and Communication Development



## Expectations for Classroom Scaffolding Supports for Curriculum/Instruction

- Use developmental stage to guide scaffolding to foster engagement.
- **Before Words Stage(Non-Symbolic)**
  - Communicates via Behavior
  - **Priority/Needs:** increasing gestures with shared meaning, joint attention, needs concrete objects for comprehension & modeling of symbols for expression
- **Emerging Language Stage**
  - Communicates via Behavior, Words, Phrases
  - **Priority/Needs:** targeting people and verbs (v, v+descriptor, v+obj, s+v, s+v+obj/descr); ex. Harper take out, go fast
- **Conversational Stage**
  - Communicates Conversationally (& Behaviorally when Upset)
  - **Priority/Needs:** Increasing peer communication, a sense of self-efficacy, and awareness of social norms of conversation (turn-taking, volume, proximity, topic maintenance, etc.)

## Meeting Needs in All Classrooms

- **Consistent Access to \*Developmentally Appropriate\* Visual & Communication Supports to...**
  - Facilitate Comprehension throughout the Day
  - Develop Expressive Abilities During Instruction & for Long Term
- **Consistent Use of Visual & Communication Supports to ...**
  - Foster Engagement -- INVESTMENT
    - By ensuring predictability
    - By appealing to interests during instruction
  - Provide Information in Multiple Ways -- INDEPENDENCE
    - Thereby, enhancing comprehension during instruction & transitions
  - Allow Multiple Methods of Expression -- INITIATION
    - Thereby, encouraging consistent participation and interaction

## VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR COMMUNICATION - COMPREHENSION & EXPRESSION -

FCS Core Word Board & Phrase Strips  
Pictured Words | Written Words

## AAC and Visual Supports

- AAC = Augmentative & Alternative Communication
- Definition: includes all forms of communication, outside of oral speech, that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas.
  - can be low-tech, mid-tech (voice output), high-tech (computerized)

### Visual Supports Serve 2 Communicative Purposes:

- as a way for students to expressively communicate or
- to enhance comprehension during instruction

## Visual Supports as AAC

- Visual supports specifically as expressive communication:
  - Making choices
  - Requesting item or action
  - Negating/protesting
  - Commenting
  - Regulating emotions
  - Greeting others
  - Asking questions
  - Directing others or activities
- Visual supports to aid students' receptive comprehension:
  - a way to teach vocabulary and language through Aided Language Input
  - to enhance understanding during instruction by making oral language visual and physical

Tier 1 & 2 AAC visual supports must at a minimum be modeled and referred to by teachers & SLPs to develop comprehension.

## A Note about Core Vocabulary...

- Core Vocabulary is a statistical concept
- Research found 350 words make up 80% of what we say independent of age, environment/context, diagnosis, population
- Multiple meanings allow for multiple opportunities for modeling
- Core vocabulary is primarily made up of action words, pronouns, demonstratives (this, that), early adverbs (here, there), and indefinite nouns (thing, people, stuff, some).
- The remaining 20% is made of "fringe" or extended vocabulary. It varies widely from person to person and is difficult to predict

## Forsyth County - Core Word Board

### Tier 1 Visual Support



## Forsyth's Core Word Board - Development and Purpose

- Core Vocabulary and research
- Standard set of words
- Social words (pink) included for comments
- Relevant at all ages PreK – High School as students transition to different settings in the district
- Color-coded based on part of speech
- 3 sizes and many different formats developed

## Goals for District

- In All Classrooms
- Consistency for Students and Staff
- Tool for Teachers
  - Assist students to visualize words for comprehension
  - Use as an early expressive communication tool
  - Use as an early writing tool with phrase strips
- Backup Communication System in which every student and teacher is familiar

## Video

- Classroom Speech, Core Word Board, & Aided Language Input



## Core Vocabulary Should Be Embedded ...

- Throughout the day in all activities
  - Within instruction
    - Art Activity: I "like" your sun. Do "you like" mine.
    - Snack time: I will "help" you open it. Do you want me to "take" it "out" of your baggie?
  - During transitions
    - "Make" a line. Stand "here." Time to "go." Who "knows" where we are going?
    - "Come" to carpet. Everyone sit "down." Let's "listen."
- In All Categories of Visual Supports

## Environmental Phrase Strips

- Sensory Room & Movement Breaks



**Purpose:** Provides preliteracy and early writing experiences using phrase strips, fosters orienting towards people, targets novel phrases S+V+obj, promotes engagement and emotional investment by providing choices

## Before Words Stage

- A note about students at this stage and using the CWB & phrase strips

- Before Words Stage:
  - Generally communicates through behavioral, pre-symbolic (concrete objects), gestural, nonverbal means.
- Best use of CWB
  - Pair salient words (help, drink, eat, play, out) with favored objects/activities or with classmates/teachers
- **Purpose:**
  - Foster motivation and emotional investment, develop interest in people, develop a finger point, increase visual attention towards others or pictures that symbolize their communication word (or object of reference)

## Environmental Phrase Strips

- Outdoors on the Playground



**Purpose:** Comprehension of directions, early literacy, L-R orientation, target expression in the moment, natural consequences paired with high engagement

## Why do we need to model?

- A typical 3 year old hears per hour:
  - Average child on welfare (616 words per hour)
  - Average child in working class family (1251 words per hour)
  - Average child in professional family (2,153 words per hour)
- How many Visual Supports paired with words do our students see per hour?

## VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR EXPECTATIONS

Behavior Supports | Classroom Jobs or Roles

### Visual Supports - Behavior Lanyards

**Purpose:** Provides visual along with verbal for behavioral expectations, minimizes verbal interruptions after student learns picture meanings, early literacy and sight words (with addition of core words)



**Large** – Provides reminders of behavior expectations for groups or when student is distant.



**Small** – Provides reminders for individual students when student is nearby. Can be worn by teacher.

### Visual Supports – Behavioral Expectations - Individual or Classroom Location

**Purpose:** Fosters independence, allows potential for student(s) to self-monitor via consistent location for reference, minimizes verbal interruptions after student learns meaning.



### Visual Supports – Expectations - Volume or Frustration Level Meters

**Purpose:** Promotes independence by allowing students to self-monitor classroom behavior, minimizes verbal reminders through visual feedback on subjective behavior



### Visual Supports – Class Roles or Jobs

**Purpose:** Fosters student initiation and independence when assigned standard classroom roles, minimizes verbal directions from the teacher during transitions



## VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR DAILY ROUTINES AND TRANSITIONS

Classroom Daily Schedule | Individual Schedules  
Within-Task Schedules

## Visual Schedules

- Schedules
  - Classroom daily schedule
  - Individual daily schedule
- Schedules for longer time frames that contain a set of activities.
  - Within-Task schedules such as:
    - during "centers," a 30-min speech session, or "morning circle."

## Visual Schedules - One Classroom



**Purpose:** Fosters engagement through anticipation, provides predictability, promotes early executive functioning skills, teaches "visualization" of time.



Visual Prompt for Transition



## Video – Checking Schedule

- Transition: Group Reading to Independent Work



## Within Task Schedules

**Purpose:** Fosters engagement through anticipation, provides predictability for a short, defined time, promotes early executive functioning skills, teaches "visualization" of time.



## Visual Schedules – Tier 1 Support

VIDEO – Individual - Schedule Folders, Spring 2016 (0-1:30)



## Video – Individual Schedule Tier 1

Schedule modifications needed



## Visual Schedules - Individual



Close-Up of Vertical Schedule (from video) instead of "Schedule Folders. Tier 2 modification to student individual schedule.

## Visuals for Transitions - on lanyards for frequent transitions

**Purpose:** Fosters independence, provides a visual of actual transition location or item along with verbal. With addition of core words: aids early literacy and sight words development



Large - Core Word & Item Equally Represented



Small - Item Primarily Represented With Core Word Cue

## Visuals for Transitions

**Purpose:** Fosters independence, provides a visual for transition location/spot paired with verbal direction, prepares student in advance for designated lunch line route.



Tier 1 Support with Tier 2 modification



## Environmental Phrase Strips - Sensory Room

**Purpose:** Fosters independence, enhances comprehension of directions, provides experiences in early literacy (words make up sentences, left-right orientation)

Take my shoes OFF



PUT my shoes ON



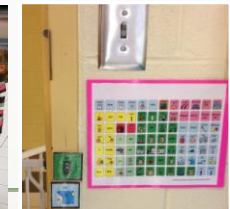
## Environmental Phrase Strips - Bathroom

**Purpose:** Fosters comprehension leading to independence, visual cues for steps, CWB available for modeling in moment, natural visual cues for appropriate expectations



## Environmental Phrase Strips & CWB - Transitions

**Purpose:** Fosters comprehension leading to independence, visual cues for steps, CWB available for modeling in moment, natural visual cues for appropriate expectations

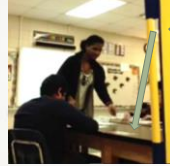


## VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

Early Writing with Phrase Strips |  
Aided Language Input during Instructions  
Help Boxes (Sequence of Required Steps to Complete Tasks),  
Word Walls | Visuals Provided with Verbal to Aid Comprehension

## Visuals for Instruction - Word Walls and Visual Aids

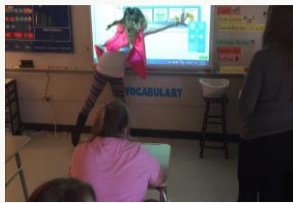
Proximal visuals - table tent,  
written word provided



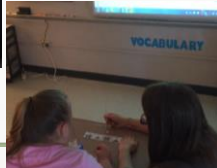
Word Wall in  
consistent location so  
student can refer to independently

## Visuals for Instruction

- Unique Learning & Proximal Visuals



Proximal visuals on student's  
desk fosters independence  
and comprehension with aid  
of teacher



## Core Word Board and Phrase Strips

- Phrase Strips using single words or 2-3 words



**Purpose:** Provides preliteracy and early writing experiences using phrase strips, fosters orienting towards people, targets novel phrases S+V+obj, promotes engagement.

## Video – CWB & Phrase Strips

- Spring Is Here! (early writing)



## Video – Group Reading Activity

- Multiple Visual Supports Utilized

Swamp Music



## Visuals for Instruction

– Word Wall, See-Through Containers, Help Boxes



**Purpose:** Sight words appropriate for developmental level and consistently available for teaching, foster interest and initiation, foster independence and predictability.



## VISUAL SUPPORTS FOR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL REGULATION & DEVELOPMENT

Turn-Taking | Emotional Regulation with Choices  
Reinforcement Schedules | Visual Timers  
Providing Choices Visually

## Visual Supports

- Emotional/Sensory Regulation Key Ring & Phrase Strips

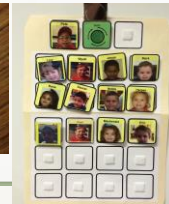
**Purpose:** provides visual representation of feelings in the moment, fosters independence by providing choices to help student visually determine ways to self-regulate emotions and sensory needs



\* Emotional regulation strategies must be taught ahead of time

## Turn-Taking Supports

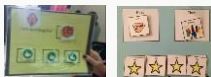
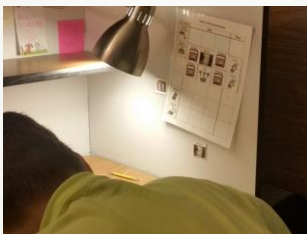
**Purpose:** Provides predictability, fosters engagement through anticipation, provides cues to increase social orientation towards people.



## Visual Supports

- Task Reinforcers, Visual Timers, Within Task Schedules

**Purpose:** Provides predictability with clear end and start visualized so that students can remain emotionally regulated.



## Practice ... What Supports in Music?

- \* Phrase strip with Words/Pics
- \* Within-Task Schedule
- \* Help Box
- \* Instruments themselves
- \* Labels on Instrument
- \* Visual Timer
- \* Turn-Taking Visuals
- \* Choice Boards



**Identify 1 Support for each of the 3 I's Of Engagement**

**Emotional Investment**  
(such as predictability)

**Independence**  
(knowing what to do)

**Initiation**  
(knowing what to say or how to participate)

## What Supports in English/Lang Arts?

- \* Phrase strip with Words/Pics
- \* Within-Task Schedule
- \* Visual Timer
- \* Vocal Volume Meter
- \* Lanyard for Behavioral Expectation
- \* Core Word Board
- \* Choice Boards for Emotional Regulation
- \* Example of Finished product



### Identify 1 Support for each of the 3 I's Of Engagement

Emotional Investment  
(such as predictability)

Independence  
(knowing what to do)

Initiation  
(knowing what to say or how to participate)

## Communication Stages

### • Before Words Stage(Non-Symbolic)

- Communicates via Behavior
- **Priority/Needs:** increasing gestures with shared meaning, joint attention, needs concrete objects for comprehension & modeling of symbols for expression

### • Emerging Language Stage

- Communicates via Behavior, Words, Phrases
- **Priority/Needs:** targeting people and verbs (v, v+descriptor, v+obj, s+v, s+v+obj/descrip); ex. Harper take out, go fast

### • Conversational Stage

- Communicates Conversationally (& Behaviorally when Upset)
- **Priority/Needs:** Increasing peer communication, a sense of self-efficacy, and awareness of social norms of conversation (turn-taking, volume, proximity, topic maintenance, etc.)

## Visual Supports

### - Appropriate for Which Stage?



- \* Before Words Stage?
- \* Emerging Language Stage?
- \* Conversational Stage?

## Visual Supports

### - Appropriate for Which Stage?



- \* Before Words Stage?
- \* Emerging Language Stage?
- \* Conversational Stage?



## Final Thoughts

Have A Ton of Fun and Enjoy Yourselves!  
If you're having fun, your students are having fun  
... ENGAGED and LEARNING!



## QUESTIONS?

## THANK YOU!

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SLPs - Augmentative and Alternative Communication  
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### With Special Thanks to:

FCS SpEd Visual Supports Team

The Teachers and SLPs of Forsyth County Schools who helped with video, photos, and told us their great stories. Keep on telling them! ☺